

DOSH DIRECTIVE

Department of Labor and Industries

Division of Occupational Safety and Health

Keeping Washington Safe and Working

18.55 Electrical and Telecommunication Hazards

Date: October 15, 2010

I. Background

The operation and maintenance of electric power generation, control, transformation, transmission, and distribution lines and equipment present significant hazards and require specialized knowledge and training. The Electrical Workers (Chapter 296-45 WAC), and Telecommunications (Chapter 296-32 WAC) Standards are designed to protect employees exposed to dangers such as electric shock, electrocution, fires, and explosions.

DOSH recognizes the unique nature of high voltage electrical work and has established a dedicated High Voltage Electrical section. The High Voltage Electrical section conducts enforcement inspections related to the operation and maintenance of electric power generation, control, transformation, transmission, and distribution lines and equipment, and assists with related consultation activities.

II. Scope and Application

This Directive applies to all DOSH enforcement and consultation activities covered under the scope and application of Chapters 296-45 and 296-32 WAC. It replaces all previous guidance, whether formal or informal.

This Directive replaces and cancels WIIM 98-5-A, *Enforcement of Chapter 296-45 WAC (High Voltage)*, issued May 4, 1998.

III. Special Consultation and Compliance Protocols

A. Qualifications for Conducting Inspections and Consultations.

Only designated and qualified high voltage and telecommunication CSHOs are permitted to engage in DOSH activities related to the scope and application of Chapters 296-45 and 296-32 WAC.

For the purpose of this Directive, qualified is defined as:

- A person who is familiar with the construction or operation of lines and/or equipment in the industry, who is fully aware of the related hazards, and who has passed a journey status examination for the particular branch of the electrical trades with which he/she is connected.
1. A CSHO must have the training required by WAC 296-45-065(1) in order to be considered qualified.
 2. If no qualified personnel are available, the regional compliance or consultation manager must contact the High Voltage Electrical Section Supervisor for assistance.

B. Referrals.

Referrals should be made to high voltage and telecommunication staff for inspections or consultations that involve activities covered under the scope of Chapters 296-45 or 296-32 WAC. However, CSHOs are not prohibited from addressing related issues such as:

- Encroachment of high voltage lines by cranes or equipment,
- Flagging issues, **or**
- Excavations.

C. Encroachment of High Voltage Lines by Cranes or Equipment.

The CSHO must keep his/her safety in mind. The CSHO must stay out of the work area until the lead worker, foreman or signalman is contacted, **and** the hazard is eliminated. The CSHO may proceed with the inspection once the area is safe.


D. Flagging Issues.

If the electrical utility or telecommunication company has employees working in an elevated position, the CSHO should stay out of the work area until he/she receives permission to enter from the lead worker or foreman in charge. The CSHO should address the related flagging issues, and refer work practice issues to high voltage or telecommunication staff.

E. Excavation Hazards.

If the electrical utility or telecommunication company has employees performing excavation work, the CSHO should stay out of the work area until he/she receives permission to enter from the lead worker or foreman in charge. The CSHO should address the related excavation hazard, and refer work practice issues to high voltage or telecommunication staff.

Approved:



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For further information about this or other DOSH Directives, you may contact the Division of Occupational Safety & Health at P.O. Box 44610, Olympia, WA 98504-4610 – or by telephone at (360) 902-5436. You may also review policy information on the DOSH website (<http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety>).